

VIOLENT CASES

RED PLANET PRIZE 2012

Written by
ADELE KIRBY

55 Leinster Sq
Bayswater
W2 4PW
UK

07962 522 721
adele@adelekirby.com
www.adelekirby.com

INT. BRIDAL STORE, STOREROOM - NIGHT (PAST)

A torch beam lances through darkness. Here it finds a woman's arm on the ground. There a slender leg.

SPRYE (V.O.)
(male voice)
You've already contaminated the
crime scene.

But also - a severed head? No -

VANDAL (O.S.)
(female voice)
It isn't a crime scene yet.

- it's a mannequin head. Empty, staring eyes.

The vast storeroom is full of mannequins. Many at odd angles, starkly decapitated or missing limbs. Some wear beautiful wedding dresses, bridal trains and corsets, but here in the shadows, the effect is disturbing.

Huge sails of plastic hang around - renovation works are in progress.

DR SOPHIE VANDERBURGH (VANDAL), damaged 30's, weaves between the mannequins with assured feline grace, torch in hand and a communicator in one ear (through which Sprye speaks).

VANDAL (CONT'D)
If I wake up in a prison cell
Sprye, you better be able to afford
a really good lawyer.

As VANDAL looks around, fascinated, she misses a movement in the darkness. She's backing up now, casting about with the torch. Plastic crackles loudly underfoot.

VANDAL turns, fast - into a mannequin. It falls down with a jarring clatter. The torchlight slowly runs over it, from the unsettling blank face, down over a beautiful wedding dress.

For the first time, VANDAL is a little spooked.

VANDAL (CONT'D)
Found the dress.

She turns the flashlight around. She's standing on a huge sail of plastic that extends up the wall. It's opaque, but for a few dark red splashes and streaks.

VANDAL cautiously moves closer - is it blood? But no - the wall beyond has been painted red.

VANDAL (CONT'D)
And why we found no evidence. Tidy
bastard.

SPRYE (V.O.)
What you need to find is the time.

VANDAL turns the torch to her watch - it's showing 1:47pm -

INT. SPRYE'S ATTIC - DAY

- which is the same time as the clock above Sprye's sunlit desk. SPRYE is perched on an upturned bin: late 20's, sleep deprived, slightly manic and generally tousled. So business as usual, but there's cutting grief here too.

SPRYE
Relatively speaking.

SUPER: "THE PRESENT"

SPRYE (CONT'D)
You could be just minutes ahead of
him.

The desk is lost under laptops, desktops and CCTV monitors and defaced with eye-wateringly complicated equations. Seems like the dive of a modern eccentric - until a wider view reveals nothing short of jumbled steampunk insanity.

VANDAL (V.O.)
If I'm ahead of him at all.

INT. BRIDAL STORE, STOREROOM - NIGHT (PAST)

SUPER: "17 HOURS EARLIER"

SUPER: "THE SECOND TIME AROUND"

VANDAL tracks the flashlight 360 degrees over what feels like an eerie ring of mannequins. Freaky.

SPRYE (V.O.)
Do you think he's there, now?

Again, VANDAL misses movement in the dark as she turns. She senses it - but there's nothing to see by the time she turns.

VANDAL
Little hard to say.

SPRYE (V.O.)
Leave. Now. You have a crime to
solve -

INT. SPRYE'S ATTIC - DAY

SPRYE breaks off, his haunted gaze drawn down to the daily free paper, slipped half under the keyboard.

A uniformed policewoman beams from the front page. The sight breaks him a little inside.

SPRYE
- not to prevent.

INT. BRIDAL STORE, STOREROOM - NIGHT (PAST)

VANDAL
Keep it together Sprye -

VANDAL breaks off as her flashlight finds an ajar exit door.

SPRYE (V.O.)
Vanderburgh? Something wrong?

VANDAL'S face says: *Well yes. I'm not alone.*

VANDAL
No...

She backs warily towards the door - can't turn her back now. She uses her heel to open the door enough to step through -

EXT. BACK ALLEY - NIGHT (PAST)

- and into the alley running behind the store.

VANDAL turns around sharply, ready for anything, ready to fight for her life - and deeply exhales.

VANDAL
I'm out. All clear.

She heads towards the adjacent side road.

INT. SPRYE'S ATTIC - DAY

SPRYE
Okay, long as he didn't see you,
we're okay.

Anything but okay, SPRYE reaches for a precariously balanced coffee. Doing so, he catches a look at the newspaper article again. Guiltily, he lays an arm over it.

So he doesn't have to look at that face.

EXT. SIDE ROAD - NIGHT (PAST)

VANDAL heads briskly up the side road, chilled - she's dressed for mid-afternoon, not midnight.

SPRYE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Now all you have to do is avoid
 contact with anyone who might know
 you -

- VANDAL'S at the top of the side road, she first looks left -

DARCY (O.S.)
 (distant)
 Vanderburgh?

- then sharply looks to the right -

INT. SPRYE'S ATTIC - DAY

- while SPRYE starts in shock, spilling his coffee across his arm and the paper.

SPRYE
 No... No no no no, was that -

EXT. INDIGO ROAD - NIGHT (PAST)

VANDAL'S frozen a moment, staring metres down the road -

SPRYE (V.O.)
 - was that Darcy?!

- at all six authoritative feet of DETECTIVE INSPECTOR DARCY MONTROYA (mid 30's). The woman on the front page of Sprye's paper. She's not beaming now though.

VANDAL steps smartly back onto the side road. It's a stupid move, but she's floored: biggest fuck-up ever.

INT. SPRYE'S ATTIC - DAY

SPRYE doesn't flinch when the spilt coffee starts dripping onto his legs. Doesn't even notice.

SPRYE
 You've seen her?

VANDAL (V.O.)
 (warningly)
 Don't - [get your hopes up now]

SPRYE
 Vandal! She's still alive. She's right there.

EXT. SIDE ROAD - NIGHT (PAST)

VANDAL'S flattened against the wall: *hell, what to do?*

SPRYE (V.O.)
You can stop her. You can save her -

No. Decision time.

VANDAL
Bring me back. Right now.

SPRYE (V.O.)
No.

Last thing VANDAL expected to hear.

VANDAL
What do you mean, "no"?

INT. SPRYE'S ATTIC - DAY

SPRYE finally notices the spilt coffee. He yanks the paper up, trying to shake off the liquid -

SPRYE
(desperate)
Vandal, please.

- and we finally see the whole article.

Headline: SERIAL KILLER MURDERS LEAD DETECTIVE

SPRYE (CONT'D)
You know what he's going to do to her.

EXT. SIDE ROAD - NIGHT (PAST)

VANDAL
And if he doesn't, we're as good as dead in her place. Bring me back.

Walking fast down the road, VANDAL flips open her CHRONOSPHERE - a wide, steampunk-style leather wrist watch full of complicated readings - as she waits expectantly...

...but nothing happens. VANDAL glances anxiously back to the corner, where she can HEAR DARCY'S HEELS on the pavement -

VANDAL (CONT'D)
Sprye!

INT. SPRYE'S ATTIC - DAY

- but SPRYE'S frozen, his face a war zone. Mind against heart.

VANDAL (V.O.)
It's already happened. It must
happen again. You know this.

EXT. SIDE ROAD - NIGHT (PAST)

DARCY rounds the corner, antagonised by Vandal's behaviour.

DARCY
Hey! Vanderburgh!

VANDAL stiffens - then steadies herself. Suck it up, girl.

VANDAL
(quietly, to SPRYE)
Too late.

INT. SPRYE'S ATTIC - DAY

SPRYE rouses himself, desperately blagging.

SPRYE
Look. Events are already in flux.
She's seen you and you're not even
supposed to be there. We don't know
what happens now. Save her.

VANDAL (V.O.)
(low)
Stop it. Darcy still has to die.

EXT. SIDE ROAD - NIGHT (PAST)

VANDAL grimly faces DARCY: a woman heading to a brutal death.

VANDAL
(to SPRYE)
And now I have to make sure it
happens.

DARCY
Vanderburgh, what are you doing
here?

INT. SPRYE'S ATTIC - DAY

SPRYE is in agony. Can't take his eyes off the picture of
Darcy - a frozen moment of joy. Of life.

SPRYE
Vandal... we're talking about my
sister...

VANDAL (V.O.)
 (simply)
 I know.

SPRYE closes his eyes, praying Vandal has a heart because there's nothing more he can do. Three lives are in her hands.

EXT. SIDE ROAD - NIGHT (PAST)

Two women face off on a street.

One baffled bordering on aggressive - and completely unaware she's about to be brutally murdered.

One who has to make sure that murder still takes place.

VANDAL
 (to DARCY and SPRYE)
 And I'm sorry.

FREEZE FRAME.

As VANDAL and DARCY FADE OUT of the scene, and the MOON AND STARS MOVE FORWARD one hour's alignment in the sky:

SUPER: "ONE HOUR LATER"

SUPER: "16 HOURS BEFORE THE PRESENT"

Beat - the street is now empty.

SUPER: "...THE FIRST TIME AROUND..."

In the silence: *click, click, click, click* of high heels -

EXT. INDIGO ROAD - NIGHT (PAST, BUT TIME-FRAME NOW CONTINUOUS)

- as VANDAL, suave in a light coat over a gangster-style waistcoat and dark jeans, strides briskly past the BRIDAL STORE, mobile in hand.

On instinct, she glances up at the display. Four mannequins in beautiful dresses. Sinister in the shadows. She briefly studies the first, the second, the third mannequin -

- when a text arrives.

SMS SUPER: "JENNA BURNS: ARE YOU WITH DARCY?"

VANDAL frowns, continuing toward the bright blue neon lights of INDIGO MOOD CLUB, a block ahead -

- which is why she doesn't see the blood pooling under the stand of the fourth mannequin. Dripping from a dress we've seen before.

INT. INDIGO MOOD CLUB - BAR - NIGHT

1930s-style vintage club, furnished with fond but imaginative nostalgia, a glorified tribute to a bygone age. WAITRESSES glide around in corsets, decorative knee-highs and towering heels.

The BAND and lead singer MIDORI (30's, Japanese, stunning in vintage chic) play 1930's jazz to young professionals. This is where the cool kids hang out, romanticising a period they can only imagine.

AT THE BAR:

VANDAL weaves to the front of the crowded bar. As the BARMAN turns her way, she and LESTER (30's, big country boy gone City) both signal for his attention.

VANDAL, not coincidentally slipping off her coat at the time, gets it first. Off LESTER'S admiring exasperation:

VANDAL

You got to be quick off the mark.

LESTER looks her up and down. Mostly down.

LESTER

I don't think speed had anything to do with it.

VANDAL indicates for LESTER to put in his order first.

LESTER (CONT'D)

(bemused)

Vodka cranberry, vodka redbull, two pints of Guinness.

VANDAL

(to the BARMAN)

Irish car bomb.

To his credit, the BARMAN barely smirks. LESTER'S considering his next move in this game -

VANDAL (CONT'D)

He's paying.

- but surrenders with a good-natured grin: he's been owned.

LESTER

You ever pay for your own drinks?

VANDAL

Nope.

She takes her drink as they push away from the bar - but they're headed in the same direction.

LESTER
Meeting friends?

VANDAL
Something like that.

MIDORI finishes her song to mostly scattered applause, but one patron lurches to his feet, clapping wildly. It's SPRYE. He's tried to dress well, but still got it all wrong.

Beside SPRYE sits DETECTIVE JENNA BURNS - 30's, good cop to Darcy's bad cop - through the embarrassment phase and now well into boredom as she determindely ignores SPRYE.

VANDAL'S trying to work this strange creature out.

LESTER
(re SPRYE)
Oh don't worry, that's normal. He's mostly harmless.

They share a little confused 'oh, is that your table too...?' moment. LESTER grins: *aha!*

LESTER (CONT'D)
Dr Vanderburgh, I presume?

AT THE TABLE:

JENNA beams at the sight of LESTER: saved!

JENNA
Lester! Finally -

The expression cools when she realises it's VANDAL he's grinning with.

JENNA (CONT'D)
And Vanderburgh. I see you've met.

LESTER
I have already been psychologolised by your profiler, yes.

LESTER puts the tray down to shake VANDAL's hand.

LESTER (CONT'D)
Lester the Lawyer, at your service, and this is my sidekick, Sprye.

VANDAL
The pleasure is all mine.
(nodding politely to JENNA)
Detective Burns.

JENNA waves off the formality.

JENNA

Jenna is fine, shocking though this social encounter might seem.

JENNA stands to snog LESTER while SPRYE returns to gazing wistfully at the stage.

LESTER

So what's trending on Planet Sprye?

JENNA

Still this new singer. Tragic, isn't it? He's been boring all evening.

(loudly)

How are you, Sprye?

SPRYE

I think perhaps it's the modulated frequency at which her voice resonates that I find so attractive.

JENNA

You see? And the fact that she looks like sex on legs probably really hasn't anything to do with it. It would be sweet. If he weren't nearly 30 and still thought oral sex is something you talk about.

VANDAL assesses SPRYE: new project. Good. She sits next to him, handing him the vodka redbull.

SPRYE

Deduction, doctor?

VANDAL

Guinness is typically a man's drink, which would make one Lester's and the other for Darcy.

LESTER loves this; despite herself, JENNA grins too. SPRYE starts to laugh -

SPRYE

Hang on - there are two men on this table, and I'm fairly sure I'm one of them.

JENNA

Sorry Sprye, but I'm with Vanderburgh on this.

LESTER

Speaking of the man of the hour, where *is* Darcy?